

PUBLIC TESTIMONY
for the
PROPOSED
SEWARD-GIRDWOOD IDITAROD NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL PROJECT

Several segments of the proposed trail cross into portions of the forest closed to motorized use under the Chugach Forest Plan. If the trail is built, the Forest Service proposes to restrict or prohibit access to these trail segments (specifically trails in Portage Valley and trail segments around Girdwood such as the Crow Pass and Winner Creek Trails) for motorized use, including snowmachines. In order to prohibit the use of snowmachines for traditional activities or travel to and from villages and homesites, such use must be found to be detrimental to the resource values of the unit or area. The Forest Service is seeking comment and testimony to determine whether such use is detrimental to resource values and whether other actions may be taken to protect the natural and other values of the unit or area. Written testimony, including e-mail (bcharnon@fs.fed.us), must be received by 5:00 PM, December 15, 2003. Information about the Iditarod National Historic Trail is available on the Chugach National Forest webpage located at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach>. For additional information regarding this project, contact one of the following individuals: Alison Rein (907) 754-2329; Dan Golden (907) 743-9560; or Pat O'Leary (907) 224-3374.

We fully support the USFS initiative to prohibit access to the portions of the Iditarod National Historic Trail that connect to portions of the Chugach that are closed to motorized use. It is clear to us that permitting even restricted access to the connecting portions of the trail is to invite unauthorized intrusions of motorized traffic into the closed areas. Further, the operation of motorized equipment in the vicinity of closed areas would compromise the experience afforded by closed areas, namely quiet enjoyment.

Valley areas such as Girdwood and Portage should properly not permit motorized access into any portion of the valleys because the transmittal of sound would be totally detrimental to the aesthetic natural resource values of these areas.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

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